

Message Text

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41

ACTION NEA-09

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 EUR-12 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-02

INR-07 L-02 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-02 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

USIA-15 AID-05 COME-00 EB-07 FRB-01 TRSE-00 XMB-04

OPIC-06 CIEP-02 LAB-04 SIL-01 OMB-01 /107 W

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SUBJECT: MEDIA COVERAGE IN TUNISIA OF NOUIRA VISIT

REF: TUNIS 2591

1. SUMMARY: TUNISIAN MEDIA HAVE GIVEN EXCEPTIONALLY FULL COVERAGE TO PRIME MINISTER HEDI NOUIRA'S OFFICIAL VISIT TO THE UNITED STATES. PRESS, RADIO, AND TELEVISION HAVE ALL GIVEN IT HIGH ATTENTION. FRENCH AND ARABIC PRESS HAS GIVEN MOST COVERAGE, WITH PRELIMINARY BACK- GROUNDERS EMPHASIZING LONG-STANDING FRIENDLY BILATERAL RELATIONS, DAILY ITEMS DURING VISIT GIVING FULL DETAILS OF PROGRAM, AND FULL TEXTS OF NOUIRA'S AND U.S. OFFICIALS' PUBLIC STATEMENTS. EMPHASIS HAS BEEN ON CORDIAL RELATIONS IN PAST AND ON TUNISIAN EXPECTATIONS FOR CONTINUED DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANCE AND FOR U.S. PRIVATE INVESTMENT IN FUTURE. END SUMMARY.

2. PRIME MINISTER NOUIRA'S OFFICIAL VISIT TO THE UNITED STATES HAS BEEN ACCOMPANIED BY AN EXCEPTIONALLY HIGH LEVEL OF MEDIA ATTENTION ON THE VISIT AND ON U.S.- TUNISIAN BILATERAL RELATIONS IN GENERAL. BACKGROUNDERS PUBLISHED IN FRENCH AND ARABIC PRESS BEFORE VISIT

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REVIEWED HISTORY OF BILATERAL RELATIONS EMPHASIZING

KEY AMERICAN ROLE IN AIDING TUNISIA'S INDEPENDENCE STRUGGLE AND ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT AFTER 1956. AFTER START OF VISIT, PRESS CONTINUED TO COVER ACTIVITIES OF NOUIRA IN U.S., DESCRIBING IN GLOWING DETAIL ALL OF HIS ACTIVITIES AND NOTING THAT NATURE OF RECEPTION DEMONSTRATED HIGH REGARD IN WHICH USG HOLDS PRESIDENT BOURGUIBA AND TUNISIA. PRESS ALSO PUBLISHED FULL TEXTS OF NOUIRA'S AND U.S. OFFICIALS' PUBLIC STATEMENTS, INCLUDING NOUIRA'S OPENING REMARKS AT JOINT COMMISSION MEETING. EDITORIAL ATTENTION HAS BEEN EQUALLY FAVORABLE, USING THE OCCASION OF THE VISIT TO NOTE THAT BILATERAL RELATIONS ARE EXCELLENT. EDITORIALISTS ALSO COMMENTED, HOWEVER, THAT "THE VISIT CONFIRMS THE COMMON WILL TO ACCELERATE THE RHYTHM OF RELATIONS," AND THAT "MANY PROJECTS REMAIN TO BE REALIZED."

3. RADIO AND TELEVISION COVERAGE HAS ALSO BEEN GOOD. ALL NEWS PROGRAMS HAVE REPORTED HIS VISIT IN SAME TERMS AS PRESS.

4. FOCUS OF MEDIA ATTENTION HAS BEEN ON PAST AND PRESENT CORDIAL BILATERAL RELATIONS BUT ALSO ON TUNISIAN EXPECTATION THAT USG WILL CONTINUE TO PROVIDE TANGIBLE DEMONSTRATIONS OF INTEREST IN TUNISIA'S WELFARE AND ON CONCERN AT DWINDLING LEVELS OF CURRENT PROGRAMS. PRESS PUBLISHED SEVERAL VERSIONS OF NOUIRA'S METAPHOR OF THE AIRCRAFT JUST AT THE POINT OF TAKE-OFF NEEDING AN EXTRA SPURT OF ENERGY. HE USED THIS TO JUSTIFY GOT'S HOPE OF RECEIVING CONTINUED USG DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANCE EVEN THOUGH TUNISIA IS RELATIVELY BETTER OFF ECONOMICALLY THAN MANY OTHER DEVELOPING COUNTRIES. EMPHASIS ON DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANCE BALANCED, HOWEVER, BY NEARLY EQUAL ATTENTION TO GOT HOPE TO ATTRACT PRIVATE AMERICAN INVESTMENT. PRESS NOTED NOUIRA'S REMARKS ON ROLE USG COULD PLAY IN THIS REGARD, SPECIFICALLY, THROUGH INVESTMENT GUARANTEES AND PROTECTION AGAINST DOUBLE TAXATION. PRESS GAVE FULL COVERAGE TO NOUIRA'S MEETING WITH CHASE MANHATTAN BANK PRESIDENT DAVID ROCKEFELLER AND TO MEETINGS WITH BUSINESS LEADERS IN NEW YORK AS WELL AS TO NOUIRA'S STATEMENTS THAT TUNIS WELCOMES PRIVATE

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INVESTMENT. NOUIRA ALSO EXPRESSED HOPE THAT MORE AMERICAN TOURISTS WOULD VISIT TUNISIA.

5. IN ACCOUNTS OF NOUIRA'S PRESS INTERVIEWS IN U.S. TUNISIAN PAPERS REPORTED ONE QUESTION ON WHETHER GOT EXPECTED MORE ECONOMIC AND MILITARY ASSISTANCE. NOUIRA

REPLIED, ACCORDING TO LOCAL ACCOUNT, THAT GOT DID HOPE FOR MORE ECONOMIC AID, BUT HE IGNORED MILITARY ASPECT. PRESS ALSO REPORTED QUESTION ON STUDENT DISTURBANCES IN TUNISIA. NOUIRA REPLIED THAT SUCH DISTURBANCES ARE SYMPTOMATIC OF OUR CENTURY AND OPINED THAT THE ECHO OF THESE PROBLEMS IN PROBABLY LOUDER IN THE U.S. THAN THE ACTUAL NOISE THEY CAUSE IN TUNISIA.

6. COVERAGE ON NOUIRA
IT HAS BEEN MORE FAVORABLE

THAN ANY OTHER VISIT BY A SEMIOR TUNISIAN OFFICIAL IN RECENT MONTHS, INCLUDING NOUIRA'S APRIL VISIT TO CHINA. THIS ATTENTION CONFIRMS GOT DECLARATIONS OF WARM BILATERAL RELATIONS AND DESIRE TO CEMENT THEM EVEN MORE FIRMLY BY ENCOURAGING FAVORABLE PUBLIC IMAGE OF U.S. AMONG TUNISIAN PEOPLE.
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